

Ayanna Edmondson
314 East Highland Mall Blvd.
Suite 411
Austin, TX 78752
aedmondson@sicklecelltx.org

To whom this may concern:

My name is Ayanna Edmondson and I am the Director of Youth Programming for the Sickle Cell Association of Texas Marc Thomas Foundation and I sit on the board. I also live with Sickle Cell Disease (Type SC). I am writing with letter on behalf of Ms. Gwendolyn Wright.

Living with a chronic illness can be very taxing on an individual. Sickle Cell Disease is an inherited blood disorder that effects the red blood cells (RBCs). Our red blood cells adopt a crescent moon shape, due to this transformation the RBCs cannot carry the adequate amount of oxygen to our organs and tissues. The RBCs have a shorter life expectancy, which leads to a decrease in hemoglobin levels. Although Sickle Cell Disease has a general overview or definition attached to it every individual suffering from this illness has similarities but numerous differences.

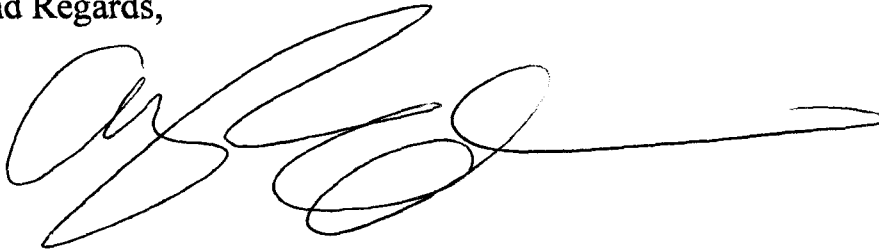
There are many factors that can trigger a sickle cell crisis, such as high altitudes, infections, dehydration, fatigue, getting too hot or cold, and sleep deprivation to name a few. One major trigger for a crisis is stress. I am a graduate student pursuing a pre-medical track, along with working for the foundation, so I definitely know what stress is. As an undergraduate, it seemed like at the end of every semester (because of the stresses of school and work) I got sick. Our body reacts to stress differently. A sickle cell crisis is when our body is reacting to triggers. Our RBCs become sticky and start clumping together, which forms a blood clot. This process is extremely painful and the pain we feel is our body trying to “push” the clot through our blood vessels. Since our red blood cells are crescent shaped it doesn’t easily flow through the smaller capillaries and arterioles. This is a very serious situation because depending on where the clot travels can be detrimental, leading to stroke, myocardial infarctions, blindness, etc.

As a person living with sickle cell on the daily basis, I must think and manage myself in a manner that a person without the disease may not have to think about. Even with planning according for day-to-day routines and making sure I am aware of the triggers my body has a mind of its own; so one minute I can be fine and the

next minute I can be in a full-blown crisis. This disease is not as well studied and researched as other diseases, so we are still learning.

Ms. Wright, may have experienced a number of the above-mentioned factors. Reacting to her in a different way in many instances can be deemed insensitive due to her medical challenge. This may be because the majority of people in the workplace authority are unfamiliar with this disorder. I trust that this missive is not only informative but may lead to a better understanding of this dreaded disease.

Kind Regards,

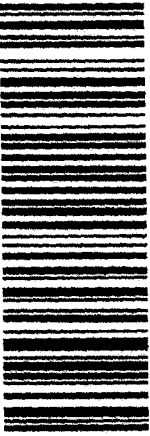
A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ayanna Edmondson
Director of Youth Programming
Sickle Cell Association of Texas
Marc Thomas Foundation

Alvanna Edmondson
314 E. Highwood Blvd.
Suite 411
Austin, TX 78752

PLACE STICKER AT TOP OF ENVELOPE TO THE RIGHT
OF THE RETURN ADDRESS. FOLD AT DOTTED LINE.

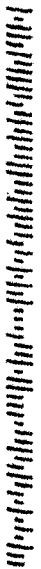
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